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## THE PPP APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

The “Three P’s” approach to Language Teaching is the most common modern methodology employed by professional schools around the world. “PPP” (or the “3 P’s”) stands for **Presentation, Practice and Production** – a common approach to communicative language teaching that works through the progression of three sequential stages. **Presentation** is the beginning or introduction to learning language, and **Production** is the culmination of the learning process, where a learner has become a “user” of the language as opposed to a “student” of the language. **Practice** is the process that facilitates progress from the initial stage through to the final one.

To explain the process in brief, the beginning of a lesson involves the introduction of the new language in a conceptual way in combination with some kind of real (or at least “realistic feeling”) situation. When this is understood, the students are provided with a linguistic “model” to apply to the concept they have recognized. With this “model” in mind, the students practice the new language by means of various “controlled” activities. After sufficient practice, the students move into some kind of “productive” activity, where a situation calls for the language to be used naturally without correction or control. In general, for communicative language learning to be most effective, the three stages need to occur and they must flow easily from one stage to the next.

**Presentation** involves the building of a situation requiring natural and logical use of the new language. When the “situation” is recognized and understood by the students, they will then start instinctively building a conceptual understanding of the meaning behind the new language, and why it will be relevant and useful to them. When the situation surrounding the new language and the conceptual meaning of it has been achieved, the new language should be introduced by means of a linguistic “model”. It is this model that the students will go on to practice and hopefully achieve naturally without help during a productive activity. There is a variety of ways in which new language items may be presented but most Presentations should have at least some of the following features: meaningful, memorable and realistic examples; logical connection; context; clear models; sufficient meaningful repetition; “staging” and “fixing”; briefness and recycling. This is a very teacher-orientated stage where error correction is important.

**Practice** usually begins with what is termed “mechanical practice” – open and closed pairwork. Students gradually move into more “communicative practice” involving procedures like information gap activities, dialog creation and controlled roleplays. Practice is seen as the frequency device to create familiarity and confidence with the new language, and a measuring stick for accuracy. The teacher still directs and corrects at this stage, but the classroom is beginning to become more learner-centered.

**Production** is seen as the culmination of the language learning process, whereby the learners have started to become independent *users* of the language rather than *students* of the language. The teacher’s role here is to somehow facilitate a realistic situation or activity where the students instinctively feel the need to actively apply the language they have been practicing. The teacher does not correct or become involved unless students directly appeal to him to do so.

**The PPP approach** is relatively straight forward, and structured enough to be easily understood by both students and new or emerging teachers. It is a good place to start in terms of applying good communicative language teaching in the classroom. It has also been criticized considerably for the very characteristic that makes it the easiest method for beginner teachers, that is, that it is far too teacher-orientated and over-controlled.